

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Godfrey L. Simmons Jr., and I am an Artistic Director and a Hartford resident. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill No. 1178: *An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days*. because it is important that everyone has access to paid sick leave, no matter their job or industry.

Paid Sick Leave probably saved my life. I'm 56. When I was five years old and living in Illinois my mother had a nervous breakdown while my father was stationed at an Air Force base in Alaska.

My mother was taken to the hospital in an ambulance. I rode in an ambulance with my mother at five years old. When we got to the hospital the mother of one of my classmates from kindergarten was there and asked me if I wanted to stay in the hospital with my mother or go to her house. I went to her house.

As you know, in the 70s there was no internet. Just the phone and telegrams. It took my father three days to get back to the mainland. And then he had to stay with me until my mother got out of the hospital several weeks later.

We, in the activist and citizen artist space we occupy, give the military a good deal of grief. There are probably some that think we get rid of it. However, in this instance I know that my father being able to leave his post to care for his son and not worry about his job or keeping afloat amid the hundreds of dollars spent on medical bills, literally saved me.

This legislation can save lives. I'm the legacy of paid sick leave. And I'll bet many of our legislators are too.

Thank you for your time,
Godfrey Simmons Jr. Hartford, CT